

REPUBLICAN REFORM BILL MIA

R's Should Allow Immediate Vote on the Democratic Honest Leadership and Open Government Act □

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today called on Rep. David Dreier (R-CA-26) to live up to his responsibilities as leader of the Republican ethics reform effort and put a reform bill before the House:

"For months, the Republican leadership has been telling the American people that they are serious about ethics reform. □ Now that members in the gym are safe from prowling lobbyists, it is long past time for them to make that claim believable.

"The Democratic Leadership has already filed the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act because we aren't afraid to back up our words with actions.

"It has been over a year since Republicans destroyed the House Ethics Committee and it has been a month since Dennis Hastert told the nation that 'Now is the time for action' on ethics reform. And yet, to date, no meaningful reform legislation has been filed by the Republican Party."

"The time for words and proclamations has come and gone. The American people are demanding real ethics reform, and they want it now. Since the Republican Leadership appears unable to put forward any meaningful reform legislation, they should allow an immediate vote on the Democratic Honest Leadership and Open Government Act."

BACKGROUND

Summary of the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act

LIMITS GIFTS AND TRAVEL: Bans gifts, including meals, tickets, entertainment and travel, from lobbyists and non-governmental organizations that retain or employ lobbyists; prohibits lobbyists from funding, arranging, planning, or participating in congressional travel.

REGULATES MEMBER TRAVEL ON PRIVATE JETS: Requires Members to pay full charter costs when using corporate jets for official travel and to disclose relevant information in the Congressional Record, including the owner or lessee of the aircraft and the other passengers on the flight.

SHUTS DOWN THE K STREET PROJECT: Makes it a criminal offense and a violation of the House Rules for Members to take or withhold official action, or threaten to do so, with the intent to influence private employment decisions.

SLOWS THE REVOLVING DOOR: Prohibits former Members, executive branch officials and senior staff from lobbying their former colleagues for 2 years; eliminates floor and gym privileges for former Members and officers who are lobbyists; and requires Members and senior staff to disclose outside job negotiations.

ENDS THE PRACTICE OF ADDING SPECIAL INTEREST PROVISIONS IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT : Prohibits consideration of conference reports and other legislation not available in printed form and on the Internet for at least 24 hours; requires full and open debate in conference and a vote by the conferees on the final version of the legislation; prohibits consideration of a conference report that contains matters different from what the conferees voted on.

TOUGHENS PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES: Requires lobbyists to file quarterly reports with more information, including campaign contributions, fundraisers and other events that honor Members, and the name of each Member contacted. Reports must be in electronic format, searchable on the Internet; increases civil and criminal penalties for lobbyists who violate the rules.

CLOSES THE GRASS ROOTS GAP: Expands reporting to include paid grassroots lobbying activities directed at the general public (rather than at an organization's members), while protecting the privacy of unpaid citizen lobbyists.

SLAMS THE BACK DOOR SHUT: Prevents secret "back-door lobbying" by requiring members of lobbying coalitions to report their involvement and requiring disclosure of the organizations that provide financial support to lobbying associations.

ESTABLISHES A NEW OFFICE OF PUBLIC INTEGRITY UNDER THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE HOUSE : Charges the office with auditing and investigating compliance with lobbying disclosure rules and, if necessary, referring matters to the United States Attorney.

PROMOTES OPEN GOVERNMENT: Mandates public disclosure of which Members sponsor earmarks and disclosure of whether Members have a financial interest in the earmark; prohibits any Member from offering or withholding an earmark to influence how another Member votes.

CURBS ABUSES OF POWER: Stops the practice of keeping votes open to twist arms and lobby Members on the floor of the House; ends 2 day work weeks; ends practice of House leadership rewriting measures reported from Committees without allowing the House to vote on the committee-reported version.

PREVENTS CRONYISM AND CORRUPT CONTRACTING: Requires government public safety officials to possess proven credentials and experience; restores accountability and openness in federal contracting; imposes stiff criminal and civil penalties on contractors who cheat taxpayers or engage in wartime profiteering; prohibits contractor conflicts of interest; closes the revolving door between government and contractors; and requires full disclosure of contract overcharges.

BRINGS TRANSPARENCY TO PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY FUNDING: Requires public reporting of contributions to organizations established to raise funds for presidential libraries.